

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 00863 110818Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OC-06 CCO-00 SY-05 PPT-01 CA-01 SCS-06 EB-08
COME-00 DEAE-00 IO-13 OPR-02 PER-01 PC-01 AID-05
A-01 /111 W

-----068837 120345Z /65

R 100953Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5048
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 0863

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BM
SUBJ: SECURITY SITUATION

REF: RANGOON 0781

1. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAS CONFIRMED THT THE NEW TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS REPORTED REFTEL ARE NOW IN EFFECT, BOTH FOR FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND TOURISTS. IN SUMMARY, ALL TRAVEL TO THE SHAN AND KAYAH STATES IS PROHIBITED, AS IS OVERLAND TRAVEL TO POINTS NORTH. DIRECT AIR TRAVEL TO MANDALAY, PAGAN AND SANDOWAY IS STILL ALLOWED. THERE ARE REPORTS FROM MANDALAY THAT TOURISTS, INCLUDING AM CITS, WERE NOT ALLOWED TO BOARD THE TRAIN TO RANGOON. (TRAIN IS A FAVORITE MODE OF TRAVEL FOR SOME TOURISTS.) THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT MFA FORMALLY NOTIFIED THE LOCAL UNDP OFFICE THAT ALL TRAVEL BY UN TECHNICIANS MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS AT THE REQUEST OF THE GUB MINISTRY CONCERNED.

2. EMBASSY IS INFORMED THAT GUB SECURITY OFFICIALS NOW ATTRIBUTE THE RECENT ATTACK ON THE POWER LINES SUPPLYING RANGOON TO KARENNI (KAYAH) DISSIDENTS. THE CAPITAL CONTINUES
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PAGE 02 RANGOO 00863 110818Z

TO BE FLOODED WITH UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF BCP INVOLVEMENT IN THE ATTACK AND OF A FIREFIGHT AT THE LAWPITA HYDROELECTRIC SITE.

3. FIGHTING BETWEEN THE BCP AND THE BURMA ARMY IN THE VICINITY OF KUNLONG IN THE NORTHERN SHAN STATE REPORTEDLY HAS CONTINUED INTERMITTENTLY SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF TENG HSIAO PING IN

LATE JANUARY. IN A SERIES OF BATTALION-SIZED ENGAGEMENTS, EACH SIDE HAS SCORED INDIVIDUAL SUCCESSES, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR VICTORIES OR DEFEATS. THE CAPTURE OF KUNLONG HAS BEEN A PRIME BCP OBJECTIVE FOR SOME TIME, BUT THE OVERALL POSITION OF THE TWO SIDES IN THAT SECTOR TODAY IS ROUGHLY THE SAME AS IT WAS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CURRENT DRY SEASON.

4. COMMENT: CONTINUED FIGHTING IN THE SHAN STATE, NEW TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND THE ATTACK ON THE POWER LINES, COINCIDING WITH THE FIRST SITTING OF THE HLUTTAW AND THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT ON MARCH 2, HAS GENERATED A SOMEWHAT UNEASY, UNCERTAIN MOOD IN RANGOON. HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO SERIOUS OVERALL DETERIORATION IN SECURITY OR MAJOR INCREASE IN THE INSURGENT THREAT.
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